

Speech of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, H.E.Ms Khatuna Gogaladze at the Fifth GEF Assembly (3-5 min)

Cancun, Mexico

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Agenda Item 16 (15:30 – 17:00)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to express my sincere gratitude for being here, at the 5th GEF Assembly as a representative of Georgia and speaking on behalf of the Constituency of 12 member countries. Taking this opportunity let me thank the Global Environment Facility for organizing this meeting and express our appreciation to the significant work already carried out by this organization and confidence in the continuation of its action. I would like also to express deep appreciation to the Government of Mexico for hosting such important meeting and giving the opportunity all of us to make our contribution to the protection of our planet.

As we all are aware, GEF serves as a financing mechanism for several multilateral environmental agreements and plays a significant role in the implementation the Global Environmental Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, POPs, UNCCD) including the new Mercury Convention.

Let me welcome putting forward the GEF 2020 vision, which is a new approach for the identification of the needs of our countries. The GEF 2020 process was launched in order to guide the GEF into the next decade by addressing drivers of environmental degradation, supporting innovative and scalable activities and delivering the highest impacts cost-effectively. We all should agree that, addressing the drivers of environmental degradation, pursuing integrated solutions, enhancing resilience and adaptation, ensuring complementarities and synergies, especially in climate finance, focusing on choosing the right influencing model, will help the Environmental Conventions in achieving their goals with support from the GEF.

Today many countries are facing climate change risks, aggravated by human activities at local level. Recently, we have faced catastrophic floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia causing loss of human lives. This month my country also was affected by a terrible mudflow as a result of the collapse of a glacier. The risk of a repeated collapse remains and the consequences of it will be devastating for the population, causing further damage to infrastructure and settlement. These justify

once again importance of change of countries' approach to the environment in a manner to reduce or eliminate the negative impact. Therefore, we welcome the spirit of the GEF 2020 which proves that the GEF will seek to integrate climate resilience in other focal areas through incorporation of relevant risk mitigation measures into project and policy design.

I would like to draw your attention to the importance of the GEF's funding System of Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) according to which funds for 3 focal areas (biodiversity, climate change and land degradation) are allocated to each country. All the three areas are very important for our constituency. The STAR system gives opportunity to countries to plan their national environmental portfolios well in advance for successful implementation of the GEF funded projects. Therefore, on behalf of our constituency I would like to welcome introduction of the revised STAR for the GEF-6 replenishment period.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the importance of the GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP), which is a successful mechanism for generating global environmental and sustainable development benefits through community based actions and remains highly responsive to local and national needs and priorities.

The GEF SGP has been successfully implementing in Albania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Georgia so far. These countries, with the support of SGP, have significantly succeed in addressing major environmental issues in the field of biodiversity conservation, climate change, international waters, chemicals and wastes, land degradation, including sustainable forest management. Hence, we would welcome the further continuation of the Small Grant Programme in our countries.

And finally, we, representatives of the member countries have witnessed that, the support provided by the GEF has significantly assisted us in meeting our obligations under the environmental conventions through implementing various environmental projects. We strongly believe that the GEF will remain a leading financial mechanism in the future as well.

Thank you for your attention